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The Pain Israel Is Feeling For Spying Behind Friendly Lines

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JERUSALEM — When Jonathan Jay Pollard, a United States Navy intelligence analyst, was arrested on charges of spying for Israel, the unique relationship between the two countries was placed for a time under severe strain. Israel has acted — and wanted to be judged — like any other nation pursuing its own national interests. But Israel has also cultivated an intimate relationship with the United States and is thus precluded from behaving as if Washington were just another capital.

"When you are operating within a family circle, you are not always careful enough about the rules of protocol," said Simcha Dinitz, who was one of Israel's most successful ambassadors in Washington. "When you go see a stranger, you put on a coat and tie; with family you are more informal. I think that kind of attitude may help explain, but not justify, how such an incident could have happened. 'At the same time,' he added, 'you have to keep in mind that Israel is a nation surrounded by enemies, for whom the element of surprise in a war is as important as any single weapon. We have to put tremendous emphasis on intelligence, and that sometimes explains both our enthusiasm and our mistakes.'"

America's friendship cannot free Israel "from its sense of aloneness in a hostile world," said David Hartman, an Israeli philosopher. "Yet it knows that its very existence is tied to the intimate commitment of America to it." The tension between these two outlooks became palpable when the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Mr. Pollard. It accounts for the often awkward reactions of Israeli leaders in dealing with the spy affair.

The American-Israeli relationship is special in many

fields. Israel receives more economic aid and military assistance from the United States, \$3.75 billion this year, than any other country. Contrary to general practice, the money is dispersed early in the year and is all in grants, not loans. The economic portion goes directly to the state treasury and is not assigned to specific projects. Israel is also the only country to have an across-the-board free trade agreement with the United States. And Israeli Government bond sales get special American tax treatment.

Under terms of a strategic cooperation agreement, the two countries work together on a broad range of military issues, from intelligence to captured Soviet weaponry. Israel is likely to be one of a handful of countries joining the "Star Wars" research program. It is providing the site for a Voice of America transmitter that will broadcast to the Soviet Union. American envoys are frequently called upon to mediate between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In the Sinai, American troops help police the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

The 75,000 American-Israeli dual citizens in Israel constitute one of the largest contingents of Americans living abroad. Americans who serve in the Israeli Army and other foreign forces may retain dual citizenship unless they actively renounce it. (Recently, however, the State Department revoked the citizenship of Rabbi Meir Kahane, a native of Brooklyn, whose anti-Arab statements have been an embarrassment to both governments. His citizenship was revoked after he was seated in Israel's Parliament and later seemed to make light of his American ties. He is appealing the ruling.) Every

year, more than 100 American senators and congressmen and dozens of mayors, governors and candidates visit Israel, often as invited guests.

The weight of these ties undoubtedly made it easier for both governments to reach an understanding on dealing with the Pollard affair. After a telephone conversation with Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Prime Minister Shimon Peres issued an apology and agreed to let senior State Department and Justice Department officials question the Israeli intelligence officer said to have

run the operation, Rafi Eitan, as well as two Israeli diplomats who were reported to have been involved. Mr. Shultz said the State Department legal adviser, Abraham D. Sofaer, would lead the American group, which will go to Israel this week to question the three Israelis.

Nonetheless, at least some Israeli officials are drawing other lessons from the incident. The brazen manner in which a senior Israeli intelligence officer was apparently ready to set up an espionage operation in the United States, they say, shows that some Israelis have begun to take America's friendship for granted.

"There is a real naiveté among some people here," a senior Israeli official said. "They think that the friendship with the United States is so solid we can do whatever we want, and if we get caught we will be forgiven. I hope this incident, and the negative reaction it got all over the United States, will make some people a little more humble when it comes to dealing with the Americans."

Another lesson may be that despite the closeness of the relationship, some Israeli officials still do not fully understand the feelings of American Jewry. The suggestion that a senior Israeli intelligence official could have enlisted an American Jew to spy for Israel has left some American Jewish leaders shocked and embarrassed. If it happened, such an act would tend to undermine the message that American supporters of Israel have been trying to get across: that Israel is part of the family and that, because it shares some of the most profound American values, American Jews can be loyal to both Israel and the United States, without any problems.

"This affair made American Jews feel uncomfortable because it violated that sense of family," said Mr. Hartman, the philosopher. "You argue in the family, but you don't spy in the family."